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# *The Christian Church in Cilician Armenia: Its Relations with Rome and Constantinople to 1198*

CHARLES A. FRAZEE

The national church of Armenia has enjoyed an autonomous status within the community of Christian churches since the late fourth century.<sup>1</sup> At that time King Pap broke its ties with Caesarea of Cappadocia, the city in which Gregory the Illuminator, the apostle of Armenia, had received his mandate and consecration. Thereafter the hierarchy of the church was chosen within the nation according to its own rules. The head of the church, the catholicos, was the chief bishop of the Armenians and, like the kingship, the catholicate became an hereditary office according to a custom established by Gregory himself.

Armenian Christians were further separated from both the Greek and Latin churches of the Empire as a result of the Council of Chalcedon (451) which had established a definitive statement of faith regarding the two natures in Christ. While the bishops were in session, the Armenians were at war with the Persians; they had no representatives at the council, hence its decisions did not become a part of Armenia's ecclesiastical tradition. And as animosity between the Greeks and Armenians increased in the following centuries, so did the determination of the national church to hold firm to Cyril of Alexandria's phrase at Ephesus, "Jesus Christ is the one nature incarnate of the Word of God." In the opinion of the imperial church, the Armenian position was considered Monophysite, while the Armenians argued that the Greeks and Latins were Nestorian.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the eleventh century the independent Armenian principalities found themselves threatened by the expansive policy of the Byzantine state. The Emperor Basil II (976-1025) annexed outright the lands of Sennecherim, King of Vaspurkan, compensating him with Sebastia and its environs in Cappadocia. He also made arrangements that the other major Armenian state, Ani, should be handed over to the empire upon the death of its king. This was effected in 1045 when the last representative of the native Bagratid dynasty, Gagik II, left his capital to take up residence in Caesarea. The only remaining independent Armenian prince, Gagik of Kars, went to Tzamandos

1. It was called simply "the Armenian church," *Hay Ekeghetsi*, in Armenian. General histories of the church in English include: M. Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia* (London, 1955), and L. Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity from the Beginnings to Our Own Time* (New York, 1946). The two major works in Armenian are those of Malachia Ormanian, *Askabadoun* [National History], 3 vols. (Constantinople and Jerusalem, 1912-1917), and L. S. Kogian, *Hayots Ekeghetsin* [The Armenian Church] (Beirut, 1961). The most recent work is by L. Mécérian, *Histoire et institutions de l'Eglise arménienne* (Beirut, 1965).
2. H. F. Tournèbize, "Arménie," *Dictionnaire d'histoire et géographie ecclésiastique*, 4: 290-310; K. Sarkissian, *The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church* (London, 1965), p. 171 ff. See also V. Inglisian, "Chalkedon und die armenische Kirche," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, 2 vols. (Würzburg, 1953), 2:361-417. In 506 at the Council of Dvin, Chalcedon was officially rejected. The sources for Armenian theology may be found in M. Jugie, *Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium ab Ecclesia Catholica Dissidentium* (Paris, 1935), 5:478-489.

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in 1064, bringing with him many of his subjects who feared living along a border now under attack by the Turks.

The usual Byzantine policy in the eleventh century was to treat the Armenians as untrustworthy subjects, ready to renounce their allegiance to Constantinople whenever an opportunity presented itself, as well as heretical Christians, hence fit objects for either persecution or conversion. Greek bishops were often installed in the annexed Armenian provinces. The appointment of native Armenians to offices in the church was dependent upon the Byzantine civil administration's view of their orthodoxy. Attempts were made to despoil the church of its wealth and to keep the office of catholicos either vacant or closely supervised.

The catholicate of Khachik of Ani (1054-1060) illustrates this point. For years he was detained in Constantinople by the emperors in an effort to convince him to hand over a Chalcedonian profession of faith. His church was taxed without mercy. Then he himself was transported to a monastery in the mountains of Thavplour where he stayed until his death. The office was vacant for the next five years. Finally, at the urging of several Armenians within Byzantine court circles, the Emperor Constantine X Ducas reluctantly agreed to allow the Armenian church leaders to proceed to a new election. A synod met in 1065 at Tzamandos, where Gagik of Kars had been installed, and chose as catholicos an Armenian nobleman named Vahram Pahlavouni who had been Byzantine governor of Mesopotamia before taking up the monastic life. Vahram's father, Gregory Magistros, was an outstanding Armenian intellectual, both an author and translator, who had served in the imperial administration in the same office and had provided his son with a thorough education in Greek as well as Armenian studies. The new church leader was expected to follow the will of Constantinople and to reconcile, if possible, the Armenians to Byzantine political sovereignty.<sup>3</sup>

Vahram chose the name of Gregory II; to this has been attached "V kayaser" (one who loves the martyrs) because of his lifelong activity in collecting and publishing the lives of the Christian saints. The Byzantines did not allow him to live in peace. Matthew of Edessa, the foremost Armenian historian of the period, complains that the Greek patriarch John VIII and the church officials in Constantinople sought no compromise: "He wanted, in concert with his evil collaborators, to corrupt and destroy the faith of our holy Illuminator."<sup>4</sup> Discouraged by his opposition, Gregory resigned and retired to a monastery in 1071. He appointed his chief confidant, the bishop George of Lori, to take his place.

During these years Byzantine authority in the Armenian homeland was in precipitous decline because of the incursions of the Seljuq Turks. After successfully occupying the lands of the Baghdad Caliphate, their leader, Sultan Alp Arslan moved northward to attack the Byzantine frontier in Eastern Anatolia. Ani fell in 1064 and in the next several years the Turks went from victory to victory. The Emperor Romanus IV led his army to Manzikert in 1071 to stop the Turkish invasion only to suffer a defeat from which the Byzantines never recovered. After this battle Constantinople's pretensions to hold Eastern Anatolia were forever doomed.<sup>5</sup>

3. H. F. Tournèize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie* (Paris, 1910), pp. 163 ff.; R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris, 1947), pp. 635 ff.

4. Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 2. 93, in *Bibliothèque historique arménienne ou choix des principaux historiens arméniens*, ed. E. Dulaurier (Paris, 1858), p. 133.

5. C. Toumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," in *The Byzantine Empire*, ed. J. M. Hussey, new ed., vol. 4, pt. 2 of *Cambridge Medieval History*, 8 vols. (Cambridge, 1924-1936), pp. 629-

The disaster of Manzikert prompted a new surge of Armenian emigrants into the empire. While some followed the path of the princes and people who had earlier settled in Cappadocia, others now sought homes in the province of Cilicia which held a small Armenian settlement since the tenth century. The Taurus and anti-Taurus mountains received many of the refugees, but the Armenians became so numerous that large colonies were also to be found along the fertile coastal plain bordering the Mediterranean and in the valley of the upper Euphrates. Cilicia had only been regained by Nicephorus Phocas for the empire in 964, so that large areas of the province remained depopulated. Thus, the Byzantine authorities here welcomed the Armenians, assigned them lands, and appointed their nobility to be governors and military commanders.

It was difficult for Constantinople to keep control of Cilicia at a time when more pressing problems frequently occupied the attention of the emperors. Some of the Armenian governors were therefore able to break their ties with the empire and establish themselves as independent rulers. The largest of these Armenian principalities was held by Vahram of Marash (1078-1085), called Philaretus by the Greeks, who governed an extensive area of southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria. Another prince was Ruben (1080-1095) who came from an anti-Byzantine family of Armenians. He definitely broke with Constantinople, took the title "Lord of the Mountains," and set himself up in the castle of Partzapert, not far from Sis. Further to the west, the noble family of Hetoum ruled as willing servants of the emperor. One of its members, Ablgharib, had been appointed governor of Tarsus by the Emperor Michael VII in 1078; he also held the forts of Lampron and Babaron which he later turned over to a relative named Oshin, son of Hetoum. A number of other Armenian chieftains were scattered throughout the area, some vassals of the Byzantines, others of the Turks.<sup>6</sup>

After the news of Manzikert reached the retired Catholicos Gregory Vkyaser, he assumed the catholicate once again and began an active policy to enlist Christian leaders throughout the Mediterranean world to form a common front against the inroads of the Turks. Letters were dispatched to the heads of the churches and were followed by personal visits to Constantinople, Palestine, and Egypt. A considerable number of Armenians were to be found in Egypt because of the favorable policies of the Armenian Muslim vizir, Badr al-Jamal, towards his countrymen. Gregory named a nephew to be bishop there.

Gregory's contacts with the Latins whom he met on his travels prompted him also to turn to the West. He commissioned a priest named John to go plead before the Pope the Armenian cause and to seek a pallium to symbolize the fraternal unity existing between the Latins and the Armenians. The Pope whom John met was none other than Gregory VII, who received the Armenian delegate kindly and questioned him on the faith and practices of his church.

Gregory VII was more sympathetic to the pleas for assistance of the Eastern

630; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, 1969), pp. 345-347; R. Grousset, *L'Empire du Levant* (Paris, 1948), pp. 161-163. On Byzantine-Armenian relations see P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963); S. Der Nersessian, *Armenia and the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947), and C. Toumanoff "Caucasia and Byzantium," *Traditio* 27 (1971): 111-147.

6. J. de Morgan, *The History of the Armenian People*, tr. E. F. Barry (London, 1918), p. 46 ff; S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (New York, 1964), 1:73 ff; S. Der Nersessian, "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," in *The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*, vol. 2 of *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K. M. Setton (Philadelphia, 1969), pp. 630-640.

Christians than might have been expected of a pope who usually had his hands full with Western problems. Already in a letter addressed to Emperor Henry IV in December 1074 the Pontiff suggested that the Latins should go to the aid of the beleaguered East. He proposed that he himself should lead an army of 50,000 men to repulse the Turks. From such an expedition Gregory expected union with the Greeks and Armenians, for he noted, "Almost all the Armenians have departed from the Catholic faith."<sup>7</sup> The pope was concerned, according to the letter sent to the catholicos, that the Armenian church should be brought into conformity with the faith and certain practices of the universal church. He had heard that the Armenians mixed no water in the Eucharistic wine, "yet no Christian, who knows the Gospel, can doubt that water flowed with blood from the side of Christ." He was upset that Holy Chrism was not made with balsam, but with butter, and that Dioscoros, the villain of Chalcedon, received approval and veneration from Armenian theologians. Gregory further asked that the addition "who was crucified for us" be dropped from the chant of the Trisagion in the liturgy. He argued that neither the Roman nor the Greek churches used this phrase, and there was scandal for Christians to add something to the liturgy which others omitted.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand Gregory urged the catholicos not to abandon the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, since this conformed to Roman practice. He further encouraged Gregory Vkasaser to write often to Rome to report on the progress of his church. The delegate was given the pallium that the catholicos requested to be taken to the East.<sup>9</sup>

The meeting between Gregory VII and the delegate of the catholicos began a new era between the Romans and Armenians, for there had scarcely been any contact between the two churches prior to this event.<sup>10</sup> While geography can partly explain a lack of communication, even more important to Rome was the Armenian rejection of Chalcedon and Pope Leo's theology. As far as the papacy was concerned, Armenia was in the orbit of Constantinople, and its religious policies were primarily the concern of the emperor and the patriarch of the Eastern capital. Armenian pilgrims came to Rome occasionally and monks sometimes settled there as part of the general emigration of Christian Orientals to the West after the Islamic conquest, but there is not a single document extant to show there was ever any official correspondence between the two churches during the first Christian millenium.<sup>11</sup> While Gregory awaited developments from his contacts with foreign churches, he remained aloof in a Cilician monastery on Black

7. Gregory VII to Henry IV, 10 December 1074, in *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum: Monumenta Gregoriana*, ed. P. Jaffé, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1864-1873), 2:423-424.
8. The custom of using wine unmixd with water in the Eucharist dates from the Council of Manzikert in 651. "Who was crucified for us" was first inserted into the Antiochene liturgy by the Patriarch Peter the Fuller after 464 and was eventually adopted by all churches which rejected Chalcedon.
9. Gregory VII to Archbishop Gregory, 6 June 1080 in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1878-1890), 148, col. 571 (hereafter *PL*). That Pope Gregory considered the Armenian and Roman churches to be in union is demonstrated by a letter to the Bishop of Benevento. In it he charged the Latin prelate not to admit to the sacraments an Armenian excommunicated by the catholicos. *PL*, 148, col. 570.
10. Matthew of Edessa says that Gregory Vkasaser had gone to Rome personally "to venerate the relics of the holy apostles Peter and Paul," *Chronicle*, 2. 108, in *Bibliothèque* p. 172. Many authors followed him in this unlikely opinion.
11. W. de Vries, *Rom und die Patriarchate des Ostens* (Munich, 1963), p. 14; A. Balg, *Historia doctrinae catholicae inter Armenos unionisque eorum cum Ecclesia Romana in Concilio Florentino* (Vienna, 1878), pp. 59-60. There was a later legend based on a pseudographic document of the thirteenth century that Gregory the Illuminator had met with Pope Sylvester. Despite the use of this story by Armenians and the papacy as late as the twentieth century, the account must be rejected as spurious.



Mountain. As a result a number of ambitious bishops, urged on by their local princes, began acting as independent heads of the Armenian church in their respective jurisdictions. Moreover, the difficulties of dealing with the Armenians in Caucasia, living under the political control of the Seljuqs, prompted Gregory to allow his nephew Barsegh (1081-1105) to establish a catholicate in the former Bagratid capital of Ani. Barsegh's policy was to seek an accommodation with the Sultan Malik Shah, son of Alp Arslan. He promised the Turkish leader that the Armenians would be loyal to him in return for his granting the church a certain amount of freedom. Catholicos Gregory also saw to it that Barsegh should provide for still another nephew, also named Gregory. Upon Barsegh's death the catholicate was to be turned over to his cousin.

In some areas of Caucasian Armenia, the advances that Gregory had made to the other Christian churches were not viewed with enthusiasm. The monasteries grouped around Lake Sevan tended to take the lead in rejecting any foreign influence, whether Greek or Latin, upon the Armenian church. In the centuries which followed Gregory's initiatives in the West, a real division of interests appeared between the conservatives based in the old homeland and the more liberal Cilicians, a separation which lasts to this very day in the two hierarchies still found within the Armenian church.

Contacts between Catholics and Armenians expanded considerably when the Crusaders arrived in the East Meriterranean at the end of the eleventh century. For most Armenians living in Cilicia the Latins came as liberators from both the Byzantines and the Seljuqs. Fulcher of Chartres tells of the Latin welcome:

When we were passing by the towns of the Armenians, you would have been amazed to see them coming humbly to meet us, carrying crosses and banners, and kissing our feet and garments for the love of God because they had heard that we were going to protect them against the Turks under whose yoke they had long been oppressed.<sup>12</sup>

The first meeting of Crusaders and Cilician Armenians had occurred when Tancred, nephew of Bohemond of Taranto, followed by Baldwin of Boulogne, broke from the main Crusading force to descend into Cilicia in the fall of 1096. This was at the time when political rule in the East was held by Constantine I (1095-1102) in his own name, having succeeded his father Ruben, while Oshin ruled the western Hetoumid lands in the name of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus. In Edessa a chieftain named Toros held power while a smaller principedom was now governed by Kogh Vasil, heir to Vahram of Marash.<sup>13</sup>

It was Baldwin who realized the potential of an alliance between Franks and Armenians and acted accordingly. In February 1096 he entered Edessa where Toros, who was an Armenian of the Orthodox faith and who had hopes of assuring Frankish aid against the Muslims, adopted Baldwin as a son. Within a short time a coup had overthrown the Armenian, and Baldwin was left as undisputed heir.<sup>14</sup>

12. Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, 1. 5, tr. Frances Ryan (Knoxville, 1969), p. 89.

13. On the Armenian dynasties, see W. H. Büdt-Collenberg, *The Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans: The Structure of the Armeno-Cilician Dynasties* (Paris, 1963).

14. Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 2. 2, in *Recueil des historiens des Croisades: Documents Arméniennes* (Paris, 1869), 1:29 (hereafter *RHC. Doc. Arm.*); Albert of Aix, *Book of the Christian Expedition for the Capture, Cleansing, and Restitution of the Holy Church of Jerusalem*, 3. 11-17, in *RHC: Doc. Occidental*, 4:346-350; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 15.6-11 in *La chronique de Michel le Syrien-Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioch, 1066-1109*, ed. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1899), 3:184-198. On these events see Runciman, *Crusades*,

The first test of Armenian friendship for the Latins came during the difficult siege of Antioch in 1097. Constantine I sent supplies as did the monks of Black Mountain, although the Crusaders complained that the prices charged were inflated. Moreover, some of the Armenians were considered to be Muslim spies.<sup>15</sup> Later, after the Latins had taken the city, they were disappointed to find not all the Oriental Christians wanted to unite with the Roman church. When Bishop Adhemar of Puy died in 1098, the dispirited Crusaders wrote to Pope Urban II asking that he should come to Antioch in person to lead the army. They noted that they had not enjoyed success in uniting the Christian communities: "We have subdued the Turks and pagans; but the heretics, Greeks and Armenians, Syrians and Jacobites, we have not been able to overcome."<sup>16</sup> Several months later, the Greek Patriarch John abandoned Antioch, and the Crusaders proceeded to choose a Latin successor.

Once the Crusaders had come to the East, there were frequent political and social exchanges between the Latins and Armenians. For Prince Constantine and the other Armenian princes of Cilicia the presence of the Latin Crusader states to the south and east meant greater opportunities to extend the borders of their own territories at the expense of both the Greeks and the Turks. On the other hand, the Franks came to appreciate the Armenians, for in the nobility of Cilicia, the Crusaders found a class which reflected their own Latin society. They spoke of Constantine as "baron," and soon the title spread to other chieftains throughout Cilicia. Inter-marriage became common: Joscelin of Courtenay, Count of Edessa, married the niece of Constantine, and King Baldwin of Jerusalem married his granddaughter, while Constantine married Joscelin's daughter. Joint military expeditions were undertaken against their enemies and Catholic bishoprics were established to serve the French knights and Italian merchants who came to settle in Cilicia.<sup>17</sup>

Since Gregory V kayaser was in virtual retirement during the last years of his life, the task of leading the Armenian church fell more and more upon his nephew Barsegh of Ani. One of his functions was to provide for the Armenians now living under Latin control, so Barsegh left Ani to visit Edessa in 1103. He and his attendants were welcomed in grand style by Baldwin II of Le Bourg. A disenchantment with the Latin rule, both civil and religious, was already becoming evident, but the visit of the catholicos served to head off any immediate problems.<sup>18</sup> Two years later Barsegh returned to the south for a more somber task. His great uncle the Catholicos Gregory had died December 5, 1105, having spent his final years in the monastic community of Karmir Vanq located near Kesoun after holding office for almost seventy years. Barsegh officiated at the funeral; he now became the recognized catholicos of the nation although at least four other catholicos existed.<sup>19</sup> The impact of his death was felt by all the nation; as Matthew of Edessa laments, "In the year 554 (Armenian calendar), the holy Catholicos Gregory, also named Vahram, son of Gregory, son of Vachag and of Pahlavouni

1:195 ff.; Grousset, *L'Empire*, pp. 175 ff., and C. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord à l'Époque des Croisades* (Paris, 1940), pp. 207 ff.

15. *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, chaps. 5 and 6, tr. Rosalind Hill (London, 1966), pp. 29, 33.

16. Fulcher of Chartres, *History*, 1. 24; Eng. tr., p. 111.

17. G. Alishan, *Sissouan, ou l'Arménie-Cilicie* (Venice, 1899), p. 313; Grousset, *L'Empire*, pp. 388 ff.

18. Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 2. 20, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:70-71.

19. Various other dates are given for his death—this is the one given in Rüdiger-Collenberg, *The Rupenides*, chart 4. Grousset, *L'Empire*, p. 386, dates his death June 3.

origin, terminated his life. Thus fell the column of the Armenian faith, the rampart of the church of the Eastern nation."<sup>20</sup>

Barsegh's tenure in the catholicate was marked by considerable traveling as he sought to minister to his widely dispersed flock. His residence at one time was at Tzamandos, another time at Ani, or in Mesopotamia. Finally he settled in the monastery of Shughur on the Orontes south of Antioch.<sup>21</sup> During a trip to the Holy Land, Barsegh and his advisors stopped en route at a Syrian village. While there he and his clergy gathered on the terrace of a house. Due to the large number in the group the terrace collapsed under the strain of their weight. The catholicos was gravely injured in the accident; he was returned to Shughur where he died November 13, 1113 after having received assurances from the clergy that his cousin Gregory would succeed him.<sup>22</sup> This Gregory was only eighteen years old at the time of his election. He became Gregory III Pahlavouni (1113-1166) in ceremonies held at Karmir Vanq which made him priest, bishop and catholicos all on the same day. When news of his election and the manner in which it was accomplished reached northern Armenia there was considerable opposition. On Aghtamar, an island of Lake Van, the Bishop David Tornikian convoked his own synod which declared Gregory's election invalid and proceeded on its own authority to invest David with the office. The relic of the arm of St. Gregory the Illuminator was produced to give legitimacy to the action. Gregory reacted to the rival catholicate by summoning a synod to meet at Black Mountain where he and the Cilician nobles and clergy proceeded to depose and excommunicate David and his followers. Undaunted, the church of Aghtamar continued to go its separate way until 1895 when it finally disappeared, a victim of the Turkish massacres.<sup>23</sup>

Toros I succeeded Constantine I as prince of Cilician Armenia in 1102. His policy was to pursue friendly relations with the Latins in Edessa and Antioch but to expand his lands at Byzantine expense since they were the weakest power in the area. He added Sis and Anazarba to his domain, making the latter city his new capital and constructing an impressive church there dedicated to St. George and St. Theodore. He assisted Roger of Antioch in 1118 with a contingent of troops and also supported the Seljuq pretender Arab in his revolt against his brother Masoud.<sup>24</sup> The alliance of Toros against Masoud caused difficulties for Catholicos Gregory. At first he and his brother, Bishop Nerses, had lived in the Shughur monastery, but since 1125 they had located the catholicate at Dzovk near Lake Kharput, on the estate of their father, Prince Abirad. His new residence brought Gregory closer to the Armenian homeland—hence keeping the jurisdiction of Aghtamar contained—but it also exposed him to frequent Seljuq raids.<sup>25</sup>

While divided leadership threatened the unity of the Armenian church, the

20. Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 2. 37, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:75.

21. Grousset, *L'Empire*, p. 408; D. Vernier, *Histoire du Patriarcat Arménien Catholique* (Paris, 1891), p. 210.

22. Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 2.64, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:108; Mécérian, *Histoire*, p. 103 ff.

23. H. Tournèize, *Histoire politique*, p. 167; Grousset, *L'Empire*, p. 408. Some historians of the Council have argued that the synod made a concession to the monasteries of old Armenia, promising their confirmation would be necessary in subsequent elections. No documentary proof exists, however. See M. J. Terzian, *Le patriarcat de Cilicie et les Arméniens Catholiques (1740-1812)* (Beirut, 1955), p. 12.

24. Runicman, *Crusades*, 2:129-135; F. Chalandon, *Les Comnènes: Jean II Comnène et Manuel I Comnène*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1912), 2:99-101.

25. de Morgan, *History*, p. 194.



next Cilician baron, Leo I (1129-1137), had to contend with enemies on all sides to preserve the political independence of his small state. In the early part of his rule Franks and Turks constantly raided his borders, but when Leo himself made incursions into the south Amanus region capturing the Antiochene fortress of Sarvantikar on the Syrian border in 1135, a coalition was raised against him by the Latins. Leo was defeated and taken prisoner to Antioch. Then word was received that the Emperor John Comnenus was approaching with an army to reassert Byzantine sovereignty over the lands lost to the Armenians and Crusaders. Leo was released; he hurried to Seleucia to check the Greeks but failed. The Byzantine forces rolled over Tarsus, Adana, Mamistra, and finally Anazarba. Comnenus then went on to Antioch. By the spring of 1138 Cilician Armenia no longer existed. The emperor garrisoned his regained province with 12,000 troops. Leo, his wife, and two sons, Ruben and Toros, were carried off in chains to Constantinople where Leo died, still a prisoner, in 1142.<sup>26</sup>

Gregory III must have regarded the extinction of the Rubenid barony as a serious loss to the independent ecclesiastical position of his church. In response he chose an opportunity to solidify his relations with the Latins by setting off for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and, on the way, attending a church synod at Antioch in 1139. The assembly was called to examine the conduct of the Latin patriarch Radulf. The catholicos and his brother Nerses were honored guests and saw president Alberic, Cardinal-bishop of Ostia and papal legate, supervise the proceedings which resulted in Radulf being deposed. The arrival of Gregory in Antioch afforded the Antiochenes an opportunity to show their respect to the Armenian prelate. Kirakos of Ganja notes that "all the inhabitants came out before him carrying torches and lanterns and conducted him with solemn ceremony to the throne of the Apostle St. Peter upon which he was seated."<sup>27</sup>

The Armenian catholicos then continued on his pilgrimage alone, having sent Nerses back to Dzovk. Another council was summoned by Alberic in the Holy City at Easter, 1140. Once again Gregory had an opportunity to profess the close relations between the Armenian and Latin churches.<sup>28</sup> The records of the council speak of Gregory as the "great pontiff of the Armenians, chief and distinguished doctor of all the bishops of Cappadocia, of Media, and Persia." In those areas where the Armenians differed from the Catholics, Gregory promised to make his church conform to the Western traditions.<sup>29</sup> While Alberic was in Jerusalem the Greeks took the opportunity to charge that the Armenians and Syrians were heretics. Alberic invited them to make their accusations before the council, but they refused, contending the presence of the emperor was required for the synod to have validity. Both the Armenians and Jacobites answered their accusers by producing documents of their church which the Latins could examine to test their orthodoxy.<sup>30</sup>

26. Nicetas Choniates, *History*, 1. 34-35, in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, ed. I. Bekker, 50 vols. (Bonn, 1835), p. 29; *Les Comnènes*, p. 110-117; Grousset, *L'Empire*, p. 388. A year after Leo's death John Comnenus died of a poisoned arrow while he was near Anazarba on campaign.

27. *History*, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:417-418; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 16.10, in Chabot, 3:255.

28. *Ibid.*, 1:418. See also M. Van Esbroeck, "Chronique arménienne," *Analecta Bollandiana* 80 (1962): 434 ff.

29. J. D. Mansi, ed. *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Graz, 1961), 21:505-508; William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, 9. 18, in Migne, *PL*, 201, col. 630.

30. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 16.10, in Chabot, 3:255, 256.

In 1144 the city of Edessa fell to the Muslim leader Zengi putting the Christian East on notice that the forces of Islam were moving to the attack. Catholicos Gregory, who had been in correspondence with Pope Innocent II, feared for the future of his church. He was also concerned over a Byzantine persecution of Armenians in Cilicia. As a result he commissioned Armenian delegates to go to the West and personally represent him to the then-reigning pope, Eugenius III. The journey was a long one; when the Armenians did at last arrive, they found Eugenius at Viterbo. He was busy making preparations for launching a second Crusade, so nothing could have been more welcome than the appearance of these Eastern Christians in Italy professing their readiness to follow the lead of the papacy. A discussion took place on the differences between the Armenian, Greek, and Latin liturgical customs—a matter which apparently interested Rome more than doctrinal affairs. The letter of Gregory VII was recalled. The Armenians agreed that they would urge their church to put water into the Eucharistic wine and celebrate Christmas on December 25, the same day as the Latins, as soon as they returned to the East. According to Otto of Freising, while at the pope's Eucharist, the Eastern delegates beheld a brilliant ray of sunlight over the pontiff's head and two doves going up and coming down from heaven. This confirmed the Armenians in their decision to follow Western ways until the Crusaders should arrive.<sup>31</sup>

The political fortunes of the Armenians, meanwhile, had taken a turn for the better, since in 1145 Toros II (1145-1168), the son of Leo I, who had survived his captivity, escaped from Constantinople and returned to eastern Cilicia. His father's former vassals rallied to Toros' side, so that by 1148 he had regained most of his inheritance from the Byzantines, including Anazarba, the capital. The success of Toros in re-establishing the Rubenid legacy in Cilicia coupled with the increased difficulties of maintaining his residence in the exposed position of Dzovk prompted Catholicos Gregory to move southward in 1151. An invitation was received from Beatrice, wife of Joscelin II (who was then in captivity), that Gregory would be welcome in the lands still held by the Latins in Marash. An Armenian named Michael garrisoned a fortress on the Euphrates, fifty miles west of Edessa, called Hromgla, and here the catholicos came to live. The Syrian historian Bar Hebraeus complains, "And when he (Gregory) came he acted treacherously toward Michael, and he took all his possessions and drove him out, and he himself remained in the Rhomaytish castle."<sup>32</sup> Later Gregory purchased the fortress from the Latins.<sup>33</sup>

Toros was not able to continue in his victorious ways. He was defeated by the Seljuq Masoud of Iconium who demanded, at the urging of Emperor Manuel Comnenus, that the prince return the captured Byzantine cities to the empire and that he should recognize the emperor as his sovereign. Eventually Manuel led the imperial army into Cilicia, and Toros had to accept a state of vassalage. The quiet between the Armenians and the Byzantines was broken again in 1162 when Stephen, the brother of Toros, was found dead (boiled alive) after a visit to the Byzantine governor at Tarsus. Overwhelmed by the murder of their brother, Toros

31. Otto of Freising, *Chronicle*, 7. 32, in *Chronik oder die Geschichte der zwei Staaten*, ed. A. Schmidt, in *Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1900), 16:554.

32. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, "Kings of the Arabs," 316-317, in *The Chronography of Gregory Abul Faraj . . . commonly known as Bar Hebraeus*, ed. E. Budge (London, 1932), p. 277; Vardan the Great, *The Universal History*, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 2:434.

33. Tournéize, *Histoire*, p. 238; Der Nersessian, "Cilician Armenia," p. 64.

and his brother Mleh attacked the imperial garrisons throughout Cilicia to avenge Stephen's death. King Amalric of Jerusalem intervened to mediate the dispute, but the Armenians were not long reconciled. Toros began a new campaign in 1165 against his fellow Armenian prince, Oshin of Lampron, who ruled in western Cilicia as the deputy of the hated Greeks.<sup>34</sup> On the news that the two strongest Armenian princes of Cilicia were at war, Catholicos Gregory hastened to intervene and commissioned his brother Nerses to act as mediator. On his way Nerses passed through Mamistra, where he met the Byzantine governor Alexius Axouch, a relative of Manuel Comnenus. In the course of discussing religious issues with the bishop, Alexius was so impressed that he asked him to write down an exposition of the Armenian faith so that he might forward it to Constantinople. In his statement Nerses was conciliatory: he argued that Cyril's terminology at Ephesus was accepted by both Greeks and Armenians, hence the churches should really be in agreement. He made no polemical attack on Chalcedon; thus the first significant step toward negotiations between the Armenians and Greeks was taken. Returning from his mission of peace, which proved to be a success, Nerses joined his brother Gregory in the catholicate in April 1166. Gregory died soon afterward.<sup>35</sup>

The Catholicos Nerses (1166-1173) is called "the Gracious" (Shnorhali) by his contemporaries because of the irenic quality of his writing. His reputation is based upon a book of hymns for the church and an elegy he composed on the fall of Edessa.<sup>36</sup> Since the union between the Armenians and the Latin church appeared to be on solid ground, Nerses' attention was centered on relations with the Byzantines. He did not neglect the Roman alliance, however. In his correspondence with Rome, he addressed the pope as "the Holy Pontiff of Rome, the first of all the bishops and successor of the Apostle Peter."<sup>37</sup> Nerses was catholicos by the time Manuel Comnenus wrote a response to his profession of faith. The emperor invited the now deceased Catholicos Gregory to come to Constantinople, but Nerses suggested in his response that it would be better to hold a council in which both the Greeks and Armenians might participate and present their positions. Finally in 1171 the emperor decided to send a delegation from Constantinople to Armenia.<sup>38</sup>

Manuel chose Theorianus, a theologian of the capital, and an Orthodox Armenian abbot of Philippopolis, John Atman, to represent him. They were welcomed at Hromgla by Catholicos Nerses, and for the next several weeks the meeting dealt with the scriptures and the writings of the fathers of the church concerning the natures of Christ and the Chalcedonian formula. It had been hoped that the Syrian Jacobites would also send a representative, but Patriarch Michael only agreed to send an observer along with a Jacobite profession of faith. The meetings between the Orthodox delegates and Nerses were concluded with an agreement which basically was an acceptance of the position of the Greeks. The catholicos composed a new profession of faith which was framed in a conciliatory tone

34. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 328, in Budge, p. 287.

35. Der Nersessian, *Armenia*, p. 42; Tournebize, *Histoire*, pp. 239 ff; Vernier, *Histoire*, p. 216; Mécérian, *Histoire*, pp. 104-105.

36. The *Elegy* and his other works are to be found in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1.

37. Quoted in "Il Primato e l'unione delle chiese nel Medio Oriente," *Studia Orientalia Christiana, Collectanea* (Cairo, 1960), 5:246; M. Ch'anch'ian, *History of Armenia*, tr. John Avdall (Calcutta, 1827), 2:199. This work translates his three volume work, *Patmut'iun Hayots* [History of the Armenians], 3 vols. (Venice, 1784-1786).

38. Der Nersessian, *Armenia*, pp. 43-48; P. Tékéyan, *Controverses christologiques en Arménie-Cilicie dans la seconde moitié du XIIe siècle (1165-1198)*, vol. 124 of *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (Rome, 1939), p. 14; Balg, *Historia doctrinae*, pp. 40-47.

to be taken to Constantinople for the scrutiny of the patriarchal church. He also enclosed a confidential message to Manuel which promised he would exert every effort to reconcile his Armenian clergy to the church of Constantinople.<sup>39</sup> Back in the capital Theorianus reported to Manuel and Patriarch Michael Anchialos that his mission had been a complete success. Since the correspondence he brought confirmed this, the Byzantines were encouraged to draw up an agenda for the Armenians to act upon. In December 1171 Theorianus and John Atman returned to Hromgla with letters from Manuel and the patriarch. A private message to Nerses from the emperor encouraged him to work with the Armenian clergy to accept the union of the churches. He was sympathetic to the problems that Nerses would have in getting support from them.

The official communication from Constantinople required that the Armenians consent to nine specific issues which the Orthodox felt were presently at variance with the imperial church. The nine points included doctrinal matters concerning Chalcedon and the other ecumenical councils, liturgical questions such as the use of unleavened bread and undiluted wine at the Eucharist, and the differences in the liturgical calendar of the two churches. The statement further required that the appointment of any subsequent catholicos should be entrusted to the emperor.

The nine points were more stringent than the Armenians expected. When Nerses raised objections, the Orthodox produced the confidential correspondence exchanged between the catholicos and Manuel which served to embarrass Nerses before his Armenian clergy. Henceforth, the Armenian bishops tended to harden their opposition to union. Consequently the negotiations were broken off with Nerses accepting reality that the Armenian churchmen were not yet ready, after decades of persecution by the imperial church, to embrace their Greek brothers. Theorianus had to return to the capital with a letter from the catholicos which thanked Manuel for his interest and promised that when the occasion was right, the Armenians would summon a council to take up the Byzantine proposals. Nerses hoped the Greeks might consider, in the meantime, if their own church might not have some customs that needed correction.<sup>40</sup>

The political history of the Rubenid principality in this period was exceptionally turbulent. Toros II died in 1168 leaving a son Ruben II as his heir, but Toros' brother Mleh had other plans. Mleh seems to have been a cruel and harsh person, and after falling out of favor with Toros, he pursued an extremely erratic course. For a time he joined the Crusading order of the Knights Templars, then he went off to the court of the Muslim Nuredin, where he may have embraced Islam. The news that his brother was dead encouraged Mleh to return to Cilicia with an army provided by Nuredin. His first invasion was a failure, but, fearful of another attack, the Armenian nobles invited him to return. The young Ruben II was taken to Hromgla for his own safety, but Mleh's soldiers killed him there and Mleh (1170-1175) was left as undisputed ruler of the Cilician principality for the next five years.<sup>41</sup> Mleh was a very aggressive ruler. With the continued support of Nuredin he laid siege to Lampron on the excuse that the wife of Baron

39. Chalandon, *Les Comnènes*, 2:656-657; Tournebize, *Histoire*, p. 246. The text of the discussion is given in Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, 22:37-120, and in Balg, *Historia Doctrinae*, pp. 220-258; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 19.5, in Chabot, 3:335.

40. Chalandon, *Les Comnènes*, 2:637-659; Der Nersessian, *Armenia*, pp. 47-49; Balg, *Historia doctrinae*, prints the correspondence. A. Ter-Mikelian, *Die Armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zur Byzantinischen* (Leipzig, 1892), pp. 88-92.

41. Abu Shama, *The Book of the Two Gardens*, 159, in *RHC: Doc. Orientaux*, 4:159; Alishan, *Sissouan*, pp. 55-56.



Hetoum III, his niece, had been repudiated, but he failed to take the fortress. However, he was more successful against the Latin-held castles of the Amanus where he warred against his former friends, the Templars. The Byzantines lost Adana, Mamistra, and Tarsus to his armies in 1172 and 1173, a factor which may have stiffened Nerses' resistance to complete acceptance of the Orthodox proposals during those years. Mleh's attitude toward the church was hostile; according to Bar Hebraeus: "He put out the eyes of many of the bishops and governors, and cut off their hands and feet, and others he flayed alive and cast their bodies to the wild animals."<sup>42</sup> Mleh's opposition hardened toward the end of his rule. Latin armies poured into Cilicia and then news arrived that his patron Nuredin had died. The Armenian barons rose up against their prince in May 1174 and killed him in his castle at Sis. They then offered their allegiance to Ruben III (1175-1187), a son of Mleh's brother Stephen.

At the catholicate in Hromgla the aging Nerses the Gracious was ready to turn over his office to another. The nepotistic tradition that the Pahvalouni family should hold the position of catholicos was honored once more. Since two young nephews had grown up at Hromgla and were already bishops, Nerses had to choose between them. He gave his ring to the younger, but the elder, Gregory, enjoyed the support of Mleh and thus inherited the office of his uncle in 1173. He is known as Gregory IV the Child (Dgha) despite the fact he was forty when he assumed his role.<sup>43</sup>

Gregory (1173-1193) continued the policies of his catholicos uncles in pursuing accommodation with all the churches of Christendom. The exposed position of the vast majority of the Armenian Christians who lived as subjects of Turkish, Byzantine, or Latin rulers left him little choice. Only Mleh's principality was independent of foreign control and the antics of that prince regarding the church, despite his support of Gregory's candidacy, gave little room for confidence. In Caucasian Armenia, where Turkish rulers ignored the internal ecclesiastical affairs of their Armenian subjects, the church was allowed to go its own way. Unfortunately for Gregory's policies, the direction there was toward a conservative position which held all the old national traditions sacrosanct. The monks of Sanahin and Haghbat were appalled at the Pahvalouni tendency to withdraw from the anti-Chalcedonian position so dear to their hearts.<sup>44</sup>

In 1175 despite the risks involved, Gregory sent a trusted friend with correspondence to Manuel Comnenus in order to ascertain the current sentiments of the emperor toward the Armenian church. He suggested that the Byzantines should lighten the demands of Constantinople's nine point program which Theorianus had brought to his uncle Nerses. The emperor, distracted by the war against the Sultan Kilij Arslan which ended in the disaster of Myrioccephalum, replied only in January 1177. In his letter Manuel urged that the council which Nerses the Gracious had proposed should be convoked. Moreover, he was willing to reduce the requirements for reconciliation with Constantinople to an acceptance of Chalcedon and the doctrine of two natures.<sup>45</sup> At Easter time in 1179 Gregory convoked a Synod of the hierarchy to meet at Hromgla. In attendance were thirty-three arch-

42. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 334, in Budge, p. 292.

43. Ch'amch'ian, *History*, 2:201 ff.

44. Tournebize, *Histoire*, pp. 253-254; A Dulaurier, "Introduction," *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:269 ff; Der Nersessian, *Armenia*, pp. 48-50.

45. H. Chakmakjian, *Armenian Christology and the Evangelization of Islam* (Leiden, 1965), p. 18; Chalandon, *Les Comnènes*, 2:659-660.



bishops and bishops of the Armenian church as well as numerous vardapets and abbots.<sup>46</sup> The bishop of Ani and the abbots of Sanahin and Haghbat opposed Gregory and would not come. They were upset that he was so willing to regard Manuel's profession of faith as orthodox. The emperor spoke of "the ineffable union of the two natures in Christ," and this phrase smacked of Nestorianism to the northerners.

The spokesman for the party seeking reconciliation between the Armenians and the Greeks at the Council of Hromgla was the twenty-six year old Archbishop of Tarsus, Nerses of Lampron (1153-1198). He argued that "Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same, God and man, possessing a double nature . . . for he who confesses God and man testifies to the two natures of the one person."<sup>47</sup> The members of the synod affirmed their belief that Christ had both a human and divine nature but did not mention Chalcedon's terminology. The decisions reached at Hromgla were purposefully vague. The emperor was sent a record of the council which included the profession of faith composed by Nerses the Gracious as a true statement of Armenian belief. Before the letters from Hromgla reached Constantinople, however, Manuel Comnenus was dead. In Cilicia the results of the council were politely ignored; in the north, several bishops broke relations with Hromgla; and in Constantinople the new Emperor Alexius II Comnenus had other concerns.<sup>48</sup>

During the decades that followed Hromgla, Nerses of Lampron became the most outstanding prelate of the Armenian church, advocating a policy of co-operation with other Christian churches. Born the son of Prince Oshin, the Hetoumid prince of Lampron, his family tradition emphasized loyalty to Constantinople. It was natural then that Nerses did not have the anti-Byzantine feelings of many of his confreres. Ordained a priest at sixteen, at twenty-two he was named archbishop of Tarsus and abbot of the Monastery of Skevra where he had been educated. He was fortunate to have such linguistic ability that he mastered Greek, Syriac, and Latin in the course of his studies. Even before reaching twenty years of age, he began his theological writing, which numbered over thirty original works before his death. Nerses is the author of the major Armenian theological work of the Middle Ages, the *Explanation of the Mystery of the Eucharist*.<sup>49</sup> He was also a translator, rendering into Armenian the *Canon* of the Latin Mass, the *Rule* of St. Benedict, and the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great.

Nerses governed the church in Tarsus while Ruben III ruled the Cilician principality. This prince had to face a new Muslim champion in the person of Saladin who first appeared on his southern border in the fall of 1180.<sup>50</sup> Seeking support against Saladin, Ruben allied himself with the Seljuqs of Iconium. To secure his frontier, he wrested Adana and Mamistra from the Greeks, then attacked Hetoum, brother of Nerses, in his castle at Lampron. Hetoum appealed to Antioch's prince, Bohemond III, who proceeded to invite the unsuspecting Arme-

46. The distinction between archbishop and bishop was due to Latin influences. Vardapets are a class of celibate theologians found uniquely in the Armenian church. The number of monasteries in Cilicia was sixty, the Syrian Jacobites had three. Alishan, *Sissouan*, p. 68. In this same year Pope Alexander III summoned the Third Lateran Council.

47. Balg, *Historia Doctrinae*, p. 49.

48. Tournebize, *Histoire*, 2:255-257; Ter-Mikellian, *Armenische Kirche*, p. 104; Chalandon, *Les Comnènes*, 2:660.

49. This is found in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:569-578.

50. Abu Shama, *Two Gardens*, in *RHC: Doc. Or.*, 4:211-213; *Annals of Abou'l-Feda*, 49, in *RHC: Doc. Or.*, 4:644. The Muslims called Cilicia "land of the son of Leo." At this time Ruben was forced to pay tribute and release some Turkoman captives.

nian prince to a banquet. He seized Ruben and held him captive while a Frankish army was sent against Cilicia. The attack failed. Ruben was at last freed and returned to Cilicia where he soon reconquered the areas used to furnish his ransom.

While Armenian, Latin, and Byzantine princes continued to make war upon each other in Cilicia, the relative tranquility at Hromgla allowed Catholicos Gregory to turn once more to the papacy. The Greeks had not only lost interest in the unification of the churches but had begun a persecution against his people. The catholicos addressed a letter to Pope Lucius III and entrusted it to his envoy, a Latin-speaking Armenian bishop, Gregory of Philoppopolis. Gregory's mission was "to recount the tribulations that the Armenians were suffering because of the Greeks, and to solicit his prayers and blessing, as his predecessors had done."<sup>51</sup>

Gregory met the pope at Verona in 1184. Lucius was informed of the Armenian position taken at Hromgla five years earlier regarding the two natures of Christ and was given a profession of faith.<sup>52</sup> The pope was happy to welcome his Armenian visitor; together they concelebrated the Eucharist. The pope gave Gregory a mitre, a pallium, and a ring to take to the catholicos along with the liturgical books of the Roman church. "Receive these insignia," the pope told Gregory, "and bestow them upon the Patriarch; they will always be his as symbols of his high dignity."<sup>53</sup> In the letter accompanying the gifts, dated December 3, 1184, Lucius made the usual requests for changes in the Armenian customs: to celebrate Christmas on December 25, to put water into the Eucharistic wine, and to consecrate the Holy Oil during the week before Easter. Mostly he wanted the catholicos to know how pleased he was that the Armenians "sought to rest in the bosom of your Mother; recalling her faith you want to be united with her in all things."<sup>54</sup>

When Gregory of Philoppopolis returned to Cilicia, Nerses of Lampron was there to witness the event:

In the year of the Armenian era 634 [1185] Gregory bishop of Philoppopolis arrived, sent by the Roman pope Lucius to our Catholicos Gregory. He brought with him the answer to the letter of our Lord and the books which contain the customs or rites of the church in Latin letters. He found our lord at Tarsus. It was during the month of October. The Catholicos, having received the pallium and mitre as worthy symbols of his office, thanked God. He sent the letter of the Pope and the Book of the Rites of the Church to me, his servant, so that I could translate them. I put them into Armenian. I made the translation exactly according to the grammar of our language, without adding or changing anything.<sup>55</sup>

At this time the Latin liturgical vestments and usages still employed in the Armenian church made their entrance.

The capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187 would have had little immediate impact upon Cilician Armenia had it not been for the fact that Jerusalem's fall sparked the third crusade. The German emperor of the Romans in the West, Frederick Barbarossa, determined to take the cross and this decision was to have great significance for the future of the Armenian state. It was in the same year the Muslims entered the Holy City that Prince Ruben resigned the principality to retire to a monastery. He handed over the rule to his brother Leo, who was to become the most outstanding ruler of Cilician Armenia. Leo II (1187-1219) quickly

51. Vardan the Great, *Universal History*, in *EHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:438.

52. Tékéyan, *Controverse*, p. 52.

53. Vardan, *Universal History*, in *EHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:438.

54. The letter is in Balgy, *Historia Doctrinae*, pp. 55-56; Mécérian, *Histoire*, p. 106; Tékéyan, *Controverse*, pp. 53-54.

55. Quoted in G. Alishan, *Léon le Magnifique*, ed. G. Baian (Venice, 1888), p. 161.

made peace with Bohemond of Antioch, offered him a substantial loan, and married Sibyl, an Antiochene princess. Leo and Bohemond had powerful opponents in Saladin, the Emperor Isaac Angelus, the Seljuqs, and the Turkoman tribes who constantly raided southeastern Anatolia. According to Bar Hebraeus 26,000 Armenians had been taken captive and sold into slavery by these marauders.<sup>56</sup> Leo first brought the Turkomans under control and then pressed against the Seljuqs of Iconium. He marched into Isauria and added the important port of Seleucia to his principality. To the north, his armies reached as far as Caesarea in Cappadocia.

Two years after he became prince, Leo received a letter from Pope Clement III informing him that the Third Crusade had been organized and asking Leo to give every assistance to the Latin army. Another letter with the same message was delivered to the catholicos. Pope Clement recognized that Cilicia was the gateway to the Latin East and the preservation of what remained of the Crusader states was dependent on Armenian good will. Leo saw in this event an opportunity to promote his political fortunes. He quickly wrote Frederick Barbarossa and the pope asking that he be crowned king while the emperor was in the East. Both recipients of Leo's letters agreed, so it was with much anticipation that Cilicia awaited the arrival of the Crusading army.<sup>57</sup>

A rather strange document is recorded at this time by the Arab historians of the Crusading period. It is a letter claiming to come from the hand of the Catholicos Gregory to Saladin asking his help against the approaching army of Barbarossa. It may be authentic but the letter hardly fits the known facts concerning Gregory and should be attributed to some other anti-Latin bishop named Gregory, or perhaps it is simply a forgery.<sup>58</sup> Another apocryphal document called the Letter of Concord was composed about this same time by pro-Latin Armenians. This claims to recount the trip of Tiridates III and Gregory the Illuminator to Rome to visit Pope Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine. On that occasion, it is said, the Pope granted autonomy to the Armenian church in return for its submission to the Bishop of Rome.<sup>59</sup>

When Frederick and his army reached Cappadocia in May 1190, Leo sent a delegation headed by Nerses of Lampron to welcome him. However, the delegation was waylaid by a Turkoman raiding party and had to return to Cilicia. Outfitted a second time, it reached Frederick's army in June only to learn the news that the emperor was dead, drowned when his horse fell into the Saleph river. The corpse of the dead emperor was escorted by the Armenians to Tarsus and then to Antioch; the emperor's son Frederick and his barons told Leo the coronation would have to wait. As a consolation the ritual for the anointing of a king was handed over to Leo by Bishop Herman of Munster. This was given to Nerses who promptly translated it into Armenian.<sup>60</sup>

Ever ambitious, the Cilician prince took up the project of his coronation again in 1196. Ambassadors, with Archbishop John of Sis heading the delegation, were sent from Cilicia to the Emperor Henry VI in Milan and sometime later to Pope

56. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 370, in Budge, p. 321.

57. Alishan, *Léon*, pp. 98-101; Vernier, *Histoire*, pp. 220 ff.

58. The letter is in Abu Shama, *Two Gardens*, in *RHC: Doc. Or.*, 4:435-436, and in Beha ed-Din, *Anecdotes and Virtues of the Life of Sultan Yussuf*, in *RHC: Doc. Or.*, 3:164-166.

59. This account was inserted into the *History of Agathangelos*. The story stems from the trip of King Tiridates to Rome at the time of Nero. See A. Sanjian, "Two Contemporary Armenian Elegies on the Fall of Constantinople, 1453," *Viator* 1 (1970): 235-236.

60. Alishan, *Léon*, pp. 104-108.

Celestine III in Rome with petitions for a crown. Leo was also concerned that the Armenian church should cooperate with his project, and a number of events had already taken place which made this likely.

In 1193 Catholicos Gregory IV had died as a result of a fall from his horse. The obvious choice of a successor would have been Nerses of Lampron, but his well-known Latin sympathies made him unacceptable to the more nationalistic churchmen, so Leo saw to it that a nephew of Gregory IV should be selected. He assumed the name Gregory V (1193-1194), called "Manough." Undistinguished before rising to the catholicate, the young churchman proved to be unwilling to subordinate himself to the prince's every wish. Therefore, Leo sought to get him out of the way, so a plan was devised to arouse public sentiment against the catholicos. Leo sent John, the Archbishop of Sis, to Hromgla with an escort under the pretense of a friendly visit to Gregory. While dining together, John had the doors locked and the room secured; the young catholicos was made prisoner. The Armenians in the vicinity of Hromgla stormed the fortress in vain on the news of Gregory's capture. John brought his prisoner back to Leo who put him in a castle and ordered a council of the hierarchy to meet and formally depose him. Nerses of Lampron was not a party to these events and Leo had to write him five times before he would attend the council. There the Bishops did Leo's bidding. The unfortunate Gregory later sought to escape from his prison by making a rope out of cloth and lowering himself over the walls of the castle where he was being held. His rope broke and he fell to his death.<sup>61</sup>

Leo then saw to it that a more pliant successor should be chosen. This was Gregory VI Apirat (1195-1203), a nephew of Nerses the Gracious and former Archbishop of Tarsus. Nerses of Lampron applauded the selection since the new catholicos was completely sympathetic toward church unity with both the Greeks and Latins. Opposition to Gregory was so strong in Caucasian Armenia, however, that the anti-catholicate of Ani was re-established by the bishop, Barsegh.<sup>62</sup>

While Leo pursued his quest for a crown from the Catholic West, Gregory and Nerses sought to reopen negotiations with the Byzantine church. To further this end a council was summoned for Tarsus at Eastertime in 1196 where the catholicos and Leo jointly presided, but Nerses was the leader of the unionist forces. The thrust of his argument was that Chalcedon, rightly understood, simply completed the rejection of Nestorian doctrine, thus the Armenian church should welcome its decisions. Representatives from the Greek church were present and vigorously questioned the Armenians on their position. Did they condemn Eutyches, Dioscoros, Timothy the Cat, and all others who opposed Chalcedon? The Armenians answered that they did anathematize Eutyches "as have our holy fathers before us who detested him, and also Severus. But concerning Dioscoros, we are not aware that he was of the same mind as Eutyches." The Armenians said if it could be proved that he held Eutyches' doctrine, then, of course, he deserved condemnation.<sup>63</sup> To the question of the two natures, the Armenians responded with Cyril's phrase condemning Nestorius. The Armenians contended that the liturgical phrase "who was crucified for us" was there simply to honor Christ. On the matter of using unleavened bread at the Eucharist, the Armenians

61. Sempad, *Chronicle of the Kingdom of Little Armenia*, in *RHC: Dox. Arm.*, 1:630-631; Alishan, *Léon*, pp. 143-144; Vernier, *Histoire*, pp. 223-224; Tournebize, *Histoire*, pp. 258.

62. Alishan, *Sissouan*, p. 312.

63. Timothy the Cat was the Monophysite bishop of Alexandria; Severus held the see of Antioch and was the most able of Monophysite theologians of the sixth century.



moved to the offensive, demanding of the Greeks, "Why is it that you use leavened bread at the sacred sacrifice, which is contrary to the tradition of the great church of the Romans and our own?"<sup>64</sup>

The Council of Tarsus finished with a declaration of intent to bring the Armenian and Greek churches together. Nerses was appointed to lead a delegation to Constantinople to confirm the decision, but instead of enjoying a hearty welcome from the Orthodox in the capital, Nerses found the Greeks surprisingly cool to the prospects of union. They still rebaptized Armenian converts and re-ordained Armenian priests who became Orthodox. The Armenians had hoped the jurisdiction of the catholicos could be broadened but the Greeks showed no taste for this. Nerses returned to Cilicia with the schism between the Cilician and Byzantine churches left unhealed, and the archbishop frustrated by Greek intransigence.<sup>65</sup>

In the meantime, Leo's petition for a crown from the Western emperor and pope was acted upon favorably. Every indication was given that Leo wanted full union with the Catholic church and was willing to accept whatever conditions the pope might impose. Pope Celestine made only minimal requirements. He requested the Armenians to celebrate Christmas and Easter on the same date as the Latins; he wanted church offices to be conducted inside church buildings and said the fast before Easter should follow the Roman custom.<sup>66</sup> A later author claimed the pope also required the Armenians to learn Latin but this hardly seems likely.<sup>67</sup> The crown for Leo was sent by the Emperor Henry VI along with another destined for the Cypriote prince Amalric in 1197. The delegation's leadership was composed of the imperial chancellor, Bishop Conrad of Hildesheim, and the papal representative, Cardinal Conrad of Wittelsbach, Archbishop of Mainz. After first stopping at Cyprus for the coronation of Amalric, the delegates landed at Acre. Opposition to Leo's complete willingness to become a Catholic was anticipated, so the delegation was encouraged to find Archbishop John of Sis in the Latin city who was sent by Leo to meet them. In case the Armenians should reject their demands, the Latins, according to Kirakos, were to demand "very considerable sums in gold, silver and precious stones."<sup>68</sup>

The Western delegation arrived in Cilicia with the assurance that all was well. Leo would accept the suzerainty of Henry. Would he recognize the pope, Bishop of Rome, as head of the Christian Church? Leo answered affirmatively: "We will accept without delay or reservation the orders of the great emperor and sovereign pontiff." But the delegates were still not completely convinced of the position of the Armenian ecclesiastics. Cardinal Conrad asked that twelve bishops take an oath they were sincere in their profession of the Catholic faith. For Nerses of Lampron the request created no problem, but some others hesitated. According to Kirakos, Leo had to meet with the doubters to convince them that in no way was their action to be interpreted as a compromise of the independent

64. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, 22:197-204.

65. Mécérian, *Histoire*, pp. 107-108; Alishan, *Léon*, pp. 150-157; Vernier, *Histoire*, pp. 224-225.

66. Ch'anch'ian, *History*, p. 216; Alishan, *Léon*, pp. 166-167.

67. Kirakos of Ganja, *History*, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:422-423. He is writing seventy years after the event.

68. *History*, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:423; Cahen, *Syrie*, pp. 587-590.



national tradition. If they felt it to be such, they should interpret the oath-taking simply as a political gesture.<sup>69</sup>

With the preliminaries concluded, the coronation took place on the feast of Epiphany, January 6, 1198, in the church of the Holy Wisdom of Tarsus. In an elaborate ceremony unequaled in the experience of the Armenians of Tarsus, Leo became the King of Armenia. Catholicos Gregory anointed him according to the rite of the "Anointing of the King," which had been translated earlier by Nerses, and Cardinal Conrad bestowed on him the royal insignia. Once again Armenia had a king and all of Cilicia rejoiced. In attendance at the investiture were the Syrian Jacobite patriarch and the Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Tarsus. It was significant that the nobles present were equally mixed between Armenian and Latin barons. The price Leo paid for his crown was his willingness to lean heavily upon the Latin knights and the Catholic church.<sup>70</sup> To climax the occasion, Ruben-Raymond, the child of the Armenian-Antiochene marriage sponsored by Leo, was baptized by Cardinal Conrad. Since Ruben-Raymond was presumed heir to both Cilicia and Antioch, a note of optimism was thus struck for the future of Christendom in the East Mediterranean.<sup>71</sup>

The coronation of Leo by delegates of the Holy Roman Emperor and the papacy placed Armenia in a new position. Henceforth the King of Armenia could claim equal or even superior status in relation to the few Latin principalities of the East. It also meant that the Armenian nation was looked upon as an integral part of Catholic Christendom, no longer to be accused of being heretical or schismatic by Catholic extremists. A few months after news reached Constantinople that the Cilician king had a crown from the pope, Emperor Alexis III Angelos sent a diadem from Constantinople saying, "Don't put the crown of the Latins on your head, but mine, for your states are closer to us than Rome."<sup>72</sup> Leo kept both crowns but there is no doubt which one he prized most.

In one of the cruel tricks that history often plays, the architect of Leo's ecumenism and its most vigorous supporter, Nerses of Lampron, died July 14, 1198 at the early age of 48. No one had worked harder to bring Greeks, Latins, and Armenians together into a single Christian community than he. Without doubt his willingness to seek accommodation scandalized the church of Caucasian Armenia, especially the monasteries. After 1194 they had tried to drive a wedge between Nerses and Leo. His answer to the monks of Tzoroked, who had written to Leo complaining of his attitudes towards other Christians, is an eloquent testimony to a man whose thinking was eight hundred years ahead of his time. In a letter answering the charges lodged against him, Nerses protested that he sought communion with all Christians, no matter what their ethnic origin:

The grace of God has given me an understanding which surpasses indifferent traditions so my only concern is for fraternal charity. To my eyes, the Armenian is the same as the Latin, the Latin is like the Greek, the Greek resembles the Egyptian, and the Egyptian is no different from the Syrian. If I should declare myself a partisan of only one nation, how can I be in communion with the

69. Kirakos, *History*, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:423; Alishan, *Léon*, pp. 169-180; Tournebize, *Histoire*, pp. 267-269.

70. Mécérian, *Histoire*, p. 108; Der Nersessian, "Cilician Armenia," pp. 647-650. The date for Leo's coronation is given as 1199 in Sempad but other chroniclers are in agreement that 1198 is the proper date. For a discussion on this matter, see Der Nersessian, *Armenia*, p. 647, n.

71. Alishan, *Léon*, p. 184.

72. Kirakos of Ganja, *History*, in *RHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:423; Toumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," p. 633; Arpee, *History*, p. 149.

others? . . . By the grace of Christ, I would destroy all barriers of separation. My affection extends to the churches of Latins, Greeks, and Syrians for in Armenia, I remain serene in the midst of them all, and without ever concerning myself with their particular customs.<sup>73</sup>

The death of Nerses was only a temporary setback to Latin-Armenian co-operation, for the direction of the kingdom's affairs was completely in Leo's hands and the momentum he gave to it could not be halted. Thenceforward, Cilician Armenia, its princes and its churchmen, were a part of Catholic Christendom until the kingdom was extinguished in 1375.

73. The entire letter is contained in *EHC: Doc. Arm.*, 1:579 ff. This passage is on p. 587. Nerses' relations to the popes can be reviewed in *Studia Orientalia Christiana*, 5:253-255.